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TAGS: [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [EWT](#) [KHLs](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [YM](#)  
SUBJECT: YEMEN RESPONDS O THE PORT SECURITY DEMARCHE

REF: 08 STATE 13520

¶1. SUMMARY. During the week of January 3 ) , Post delivered the reftel points to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Transportation Yemen Coast Guard, and Ministry of Industry and Trade. Other relevant individuals were also notified. Overall, the ROYG defended its port security procedures, but would welcome another visit by a technical U.S. Coast Guard team. END SUMMARY.

¶2. The Chargé delivered reftel demarche to Foreign Minister Abubakr al-Qirbi during a January 4 meeting on another topic. Al-Qirbi promised to pass along the message to all relevant ministries.

¶3. On January 5, the Chargé discussed the message with Minister of Transportation Khaled Alwazir. Alwazir is well versed in various aspects of the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) code. He said that he personally oversees port inspections to verify that they are compliant with the Port Facility Security Plan. Alwazir was familiar with the 2007 U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) visits to Aden and Hodeidah, and said he received a letter following the assessments congratulating the ROYG on its security procedures. He expressed confusion over why the assessment of the ports has since changed. The Chargé explained that the USG is concerned about the level of port security in Yemen in light of the successful terrorist attacks on western interests in 2007 and 2008. As a valued counterterrorism partner, the Chargé continued, it is in the best interest of both the USG and the ROYG to work together to resolve any port security concerns. Alwazir said that the USCG could visit anytime, and he asked to send his maritime security inspectors to the U.S. to see how the U.S. operates its port security plan.

¶4. Chairman of the Yemen Coast Guard (YCG), General Ali Rasa, also appeared perplexed by the message when Poloff delivered the demarche on January 7. Reviewing each point, the General told Poloff that the ROYG was already in compliance with the recommendations, which he repeatedly called "too general with no specifics." Rasa said that he thought the assessment would review the types of security equipment necessary for the YCG to expand its capability, but this information is not included. He promised to review the message in further detail and provide any additional comments or questions.

¶5. Minister of Industry and Trade Yahya al-Mutawakel requested additional assistance for the YCG during a January 7 meeting with the Charg to discuss the message. Al-Mutawakel had previously reviewed the points sent to him by the Minister of Transportation, and echoed the sentiment that the message was contradictory to the ROYG's successful 2007 assessment.

¶6. Post further sent reftel points to the governors of Aden, Hadramawt, and Hodeidah, requesting that the governors forward the points to the security directors at the ports of Aden, Hodeidah, and Mukalla. The Charg also sent the points to the Shura Council's maritime expert. Relevant British trainers and advisors who work with the YCG in Aden will be notified of the points following their January 10 return to Yemen so that they can help reinforce our message.

¶7. All ROYG officials contacted welcomed a potential USCG visit and Post is standing by to help facilitate. Post's point of contact for port security issues, Political Officer Kimberly Phelan, can be reached at 967-1-755-2156 or PhelanKG@state.gov.

¶8. COMMENT. Undoubtedly, a USCG visit will be necessary to explain the technical instructions in the recommendations. As it stands, the ROYG appears to genuinely believe that it is in compliance with ISPS code. The YCG's repeated requests for equipment are not unreasonable; the organization's resources are stretched thin. Both the Minister of Transportation and the YCG agree that security in Mukalla is inadequate. Without a deeper budget and more assistance, it will be a Herculean task for the YCG to increase security measures already in place, let alone expand its capability to other ports. If possible, Post recommends an individual assessment for each of Yemen's ports. This will allow Yemen to start implementing the reftel recommendations in Aden soonest, where the vast majority of Yemen's shipping traffic ports, while minimizing demands on the ROYG. This would also minimize the impact on the shipping industry by applying conditions of entry only on ships that have called at a Yemeni port other than Aden within five port calls of a U.S. arrival. END COMMENT.  
BRYAN